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ABSTRACT

A discussion is presented of the philosophy undergirding the 5-year teacher education program at the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. In this program, students can earn a baccalaureate degree from the university and a Master of Teaching degree from the Curry School. The program seeks to produce teachers who are effective decision makers who can make appropriate, consistent, and defensible decisions about student achievement and learning outcomes, and are technically competent as well as questioning, critical, and reflective educators. Throughout the program, students examine thier own characteristics and motives for teaching, investigate various educational philosophies, and look at professional issues of teaching in general and for themselves. The early focus of the program is on child development, learning, and the exceptional child. The prospective teachers have a long-term tutoring relationship with a pupil in a local school as a part of their field work. The curriculum provides an opportunity for students to develop a professional identity, refine lesson delivery skills, and learn concepts of professional behavior, judgment, and responsibility. (JD)

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Reflection in the University of Virginia's Five-Year Teacher Education Program

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COGITO, ERGO SUM

Reflection in the University of Virginia's
Five-Year Teacher Education Program

> Knowledge is the currency in which a teacher deals; yet the teacher's own knowledge is allowed to become stale and devalued, as though ideas were not the lifeblood of the occupation. The circumstances of teaching (and the relatively meager salaries) cause teachers not to respect themselves, much less each other. As long as teachers occupy so lowly a niche, they are not apt to gain access to decision-making (Maeroff, 1988).
>
> I have no time whatever for any system which recruits high-powered thinkers to contrive and foist a curriculum on the schools. This cannot work unless we believe that the teacher of the future is to be a low-grade technician working under someone else's instructions rather than a professional making his own diagnosis and prescribing his own treatments. (Clegg, 1968).
>
> Knowledge itself is power. (Bacon, 1619)

Knowledge itself, the ability to reflect on it, and the conditions to activate it are the basis of professionalism, self-actualization, and success in teaching as well as the root of educational power. This succinct description of knowledge forms the basis for the University of Virginia's Five-Year Teacher Education Program.

THE VIRGINIA APPROACH

Four years ago, the University of Virginia committed its resources and reputation to a new program of teacher preparation. Amidst the critical reports of the early '80s,, the Curry School of Education at Virginia became a charter member of the Holmes Group and subjected its own curriculum to an intense review and overhaul. The result of that effort, which involved both the School of Education and the College of Arts and Sciences, was a five-year teacher education program in which students can earn a baccalaureate degree from the College and a Master of Teaching degree from the Curry School.

The Univerasity's commitment to improvement in teacher education is based on several beliefs:

1. Effective teacher education programs allow the prospective teacher to exercise increased independence in decision-making responsiblities.

2. Quality teacher education programs integrate class work and field experiences; laboratory activities and field experiences should accompany and be a crucial element of professional courses.

3. Respected teacher education programs include significant involvement from skilled classroom teachers.

REFLECTION

Ross (in press) points out the problematic nature of reflection reflective components in teacher education programs:

> Multiple definitions of reflection exist....One is based on Schon's (1983) definition of reflection as a process of problem setting, framing, and exploration within context. One views reflection as a techniques for analyzing one's teaching skills. And one incorporates Schon's processes of reflection into a moral and ethical framework for reflective decision-making and teacher empowerment....We define reflection as a way of thinking about educational matters that involve the ability to make rational choices and to assume responsibility for those choices.

The Virginia program also assumes that reflection is based on this last definition of professional decision-making and identifies three levels of reflection. The UVa program provides students with opportunities to function at the three different levels of reflection.

Level I

The first and least complex level is based on a metaphor of production. Teachers practicing on this level are capable of technical rationality (Van Manen, 1977), routine action (Dewey, 1933), execution (Tom, 1985), technical competence (Zeichner, 1983) or information processing (Moore, Mintz, and Biermann, 1987). A teacher who might be characterized as a Level I educator would:

--possess the basic skills of teaching
--possess the technical ability to convey knowledge
--tend to perpetuate and model what they have seen before
--be primarily concerned with known ends of instruction by assuming those ends are static and unquestionable
--focus on activities which may or may not be part of a coherent strategy moving toward an identified goal
--choose from published alternatives such as a teacher's manual or curriculum guide
--use well-tested patterns of educational practice

Sheila MacGregor, a Level I Teacher

It is 3:15 p.m. Sheila MacGregor is using her required planning time to plan tomorrow's seventh grade language arts lesson on adjectives. Her first step is to find the teacher's guide that accompanied her text series. Turning to the bookcase, she notices

her plants are dry so she interrupts her work to water them. She returns to her planning and locates the guide on the bookcase with other teacher's editions just behind her centrally located desk.

After reading the material her students will be using in class, Sheila puts the definitions of the words "adjective" and "modifier" on the board. She notices that Terry has forgotten to wash the chalk board and makes a mental note to order more chalk. After making a few notes in her plan book, Sheila decides that students will copy both definitions into their vocabulary notebooks. She concludes this is a good plan because she hasn't finished grading yesterday's spelling quiz and this will give her a few moments to get that done. It will also keeps students busy; the activity will be particularly beneficial for Roger, who tends to be noisy and rowdy as he comes into class each day. She wishes Roger would learn some self-control; she has removed him from class three times and sent him to the principal's office twice in recent weeks.

Using the directions from the teacher's guide, Sheila decides she will have the class read the information on adjectives from the text in round-robin fashion, row-by-row, desk-by-desk. The desks are arranged alphabetically so Sheila can check off their names in her grade book as they read. Sheila writes down a practice exercise for the students, just in case the readingis finished early.

By including some seatwork, Sheila will be able to spend a few moments with two new students from who are recent immigrants from Korea. Since the school was not able to provide special materials for them, she felt lucky to dig up some old "Dick and Jane" readers for their use. She is not quite sure what their reading level is, since she is unclear about the interpretation of test scores from a battery administered earlier in the year. She thinks she'll make an appointment with the guidance counselor to see if the LD resource teacher or special ed teacher can work with the Korean children.

Turning her attention back to her plan book, Sheila hopes she'll have about five minutes of the lesson left before the bell rings so she can remind them of the new demerit system that will begin on Monday. Sheila has developed a new management plan in response to a mandate from the central office requiring each teacher to choose a professional development objective for the year. She was glad when this objective was approved by the office beccause she had a hard time determining what they wanted. Sheila's objective is to improve the behavior of the students in her class.

As Sheila thinks about the class, she wonders how Roger, Sammy, and Bill will handle the independent work; they have been very noisy and distractable lately. "Perhaps I should start my demerit system today," she thinks. "That will keep them on task." She decides to post a demerit list on the bulletin board just under the "Make a Board" packaged materials she bought at the local teacher's store. As she posts the list, she notes the time is 3:54, just enough to gather her books and knitting bag and head for the door in time to beat the 4 p.m. rush.

Level II

The second and more complex level of teaching might be called the decision-making level. Mirroring a metaphor of choice, it is one characterized by practical action (Van Manen, 1977), reflective action (Dewey, 1933), educational worth (Zeichner, 1983), and disciplined inquiry (Moore, Mintz, and Biermann, 1987). Teachers practicing at this level would possess and use Level I skills but also practice appropriate, consistent, and defensible instructional decision-making.

A teacher who might be characterized as a Level II educator would :

--emphasize problem-solving and critical thinking in students
--make thoughtful choices from a number of competing, and often equal objectives
--assess the various consequences of instruction
--show a commitment to continued personal growth
--be aware of and tolerant of individual differences in students
--borrow, evaluate, and create interesting learning opportunities for students

Sheila MacGregor--Level II

As part of her unit on parts of speech, Sheila is planning for her seventh grade language arts lesson on adjectives during her free period. Although she is aware that being able to identify and write adjectives is part of the school district's curriculum, Sheila believes the most important skill when studying parts of speech is their appropriate use in communication. If students realize the importance of being able to communicate with others in real life situations, Sheila reasons, they will be able to function as fully literate members of society. Sheila has been stressing the importance of writing all year--not a simple task in a class with reading levels that range from fourth to eleventh grade. With this lesson, Sheila particularly wants to reach the children who are having trouble reading.

Sheila's planning is interrupted by the appearance of Mr. Patton, the principal. He has come to inform her that her request for travel funds to attend the annual statewide reading conference has been approved. She is especially pleased that she will be able to meet with a former professor of hers; they have been working on a project to identify trade books and activities which encourage writing in low-ability readers. This project will fit in nicely with the district mandate requiring teachers to develop professional growth objectives.

Looking through the teacher's edition of their text, Sheila realizes she will not be able to use the provided suggestions. She decides that an activity which emphasizes copying and underlining

adjectives will not meet her students' needs. As she reflects on her class, she thinks that a cooperative learning experience might help with the discipline problems she has been having during independent work time. She observes, "It's no wonder the children are having difficulty staying on task--the exercises have been way too hard for some, too easy for others." Unfortunately, it has become cool not to complete assignments well.

Sheila decides that she will present the concept of adjectives to the whole class through the use of pictures from Sports Illustrated and Life magazines. She will ask students to describe the pictures and help them to identify the adjectives and how these adjectives modify words. Afterward, Sheila will divide the class into groups and have them write captions for some of the pictures of the recent Olympic Games.

Sheila would also like the class to understand the concept of effective communication with adjectives. She decides to concentrate on her introduction to the activity. She will explain that a caption must capture and describe a picture succinctly and will give examples of situations in which clear, succinct descriptions are valuable. "This," thinks Sheila, "would be a good first step in using adjectives in writing--one on which the students and I can continue to build throughout the year."

Level III

The most complex level, based on a metaphor of liberation, stresses critical reflection (Van Manen, 1977), reflective thought (Dewey, 1933), the moral and ethical dimensions of action (Zeichner, 1983), reflective practice (Schon, 1983), and reflective inquiry (Moore, Mintz, and Biermann, 1987).

The teacher who might be characterized as a Level III educator would :

--strive to continue a program of self-directed growth
--apply moral and ethical criteria to educational decisions
--assume personal responsibility for teaching and learning
--identify and act on perplexities encountered in teaching
--provide leadership in school settings
--act to resolve inconsistencies between belief, values and behavior through reflection
--experiment and take risks while realizing the possibility of loss

Sheila MacGregor--Level III

It's Saturday afternoon, and Sheila MacGregor is washing her windows. As is so often the case, her mind is on school. The grammar unit starts next week, and Sheila always finds it difficult to plan. She has been experimenting for five years with various techniques and materials for teaching the parts of speech, and has a wide range of lesson ideas from which to choose. She made the

decision a long time ago that grammar must be taught within a meaningful and interesting context. She keeps a file of various samples of text (newspaper stories, editorials, short stories, poems, advertisements, etc.) through which she teaches her students about the parts of speech.

Last year, Sheila had a conflict with the assitant principal over the news articles. He insisted that current events should be covered in the social studies class, not in language arts. Further, a parent had complained when Sheila included several articles about the state's proposed family life program. Sheila felt strongly that kids should be at least aware of, if not included in a decision-making process that could profoundly affect their lives.

As she climbs onto a chair to reach the top window panes, Sheila mentally prepares the arguments she knows she will need on Monday when she meets with the eighth grade English teachers. As grade level chairperson for the seventh grade, Sheila encourages team planning and collaboration by teachers. She has to admit to herself, though, that her initiative toward curriculum coordination between seventh and eighth grades has resulted in some degree of conflict--especially with the English teachers. Sheila believes their lock-step teaching of isolated skills (such as identifying all the adjectives in twenty unrelated sentences) reinforces many students' belief that what they learn in school has no relationship to real life. "Not only that," Sheila mutters to herself, "but it's deathly dull."

This line of thinking brings two people to mind. Mrs. Cratchit, an English teacher who has been teaching for close to thirty years, feels strongly that school should not be entertaining. Grammar, she believes, is a discipline and makes for a disciplined mind--and it should be taught in a disciplined manner. The trouble with schools, she claims, is they try to compete with TV in a misguided attempt to be fun.

She also thinks of Roger; actually she thinks Roger is not all that unusual for a seventh grader, but he is somewhat harder to motivate than most. Sheila conducted a couple of interviews with Roger early in the year and discovered that even though his grades were poor, his favorite hobby is reading. Sometimes she arranges alternate assignments for Roger, in order to capitalize on his reading interest. Sheila smiles to herself, thinking that Roger could probably list a hundred adjectives to describe a motorcycle. "I wish I could spend more time with him," she thinks, "but there are so many others..."

"OK," says Sheila to the Windex bottle, "What exactly are my goals for this unit?" Sheila knows that her primary objective in teaching parts of speech is to help students understand that the language they use has an overall structure. This understanding will enable them to communicate more effectively as speakers and as writers. She wants them to learn to think about what they read and write, using the mechanics of the language as a tool--not just as an

end in themselves. "The patterns in a sentence are important," she thinks, "and how do I teach that?"

After about a half hour of window washing and talking to herself, Sheila sits down at the kitchen table with a cup of coffee andd her plan book. She makes the following notes:

Parts of speech/patterns in language
--comparing sentences--look for commonalities
subject/verb
--words that go together--how could they be grouped?
--can parts of some sentences "stand alone?"
Can I use students' own writing? Probably not--I need a text that includes sentences that contain several modifiers!

Now Sheila feels that the week of instruction is beginning to have some focus. She will write out a specific lesson plan later using these ideas as a basis.

THE VIRGINIA PROGRAM MODEL

The program model seeks to produce teachers who are effective decision-makers. An effective decision-maker is a teacher who can make appropriate, consistent, and defensible decisions about student achievement and learning outcomes. The Virginia program attempts to build upon the individual student's strengths and to empower each teacher to become an active shareholder in the educational process. The goal of the program is based on models of critical thinking, reflection, and empowerment. It rests on an unstated assumption that Virginia graduates will enter schools as proactive participants: they will be problem-identifiers, problem-solvers, activists, and reformers. The program also assumes that teachers who are effective decision-makers must not only be technically competent, but also be questioning, critical, thoughtful educators.

This complex set of teaching skills is acquired through cognitive understanding followed by practice and feedback on professional performances. Five separate, yet overlapping, cognitive domains are emphasized:

--knowledge of subject matter related to teaching area
--knowledge of subject matter complementary to teaching area
--knowledge of substantive areas
--knowledge of self
--pedagogical knowledge and skill

The program aims to help both beginning teachers and veteran teachers nurture skills in their discipline areas, pedagogy, and reflection. The UVA model provides opportunities for students to develop all three levels; however, it focuses on the image of teacher as decision-maker. (See Appendix A)

Specific courses offer a chance for development of skills in information processing, disciplined inquiry, and reflective inquiry. An analysis of the syllabi, specific class assignments, and student work samples provides some insight into opportunities for the development of individual abilities for reflection.

Students begin their professional training in the fall of their second year. Students in this course, Teaching as a Profession, examine their own characteristics and motives for teaching, investigate various educational philosophies, delve into the characteristics of schools today (and how these attributes are related to the development of schools historically) and look at professional issues of teaching in general and for themselves. Required course papers are geared toward reflective thinking. For example, a paper might consider how individual personality traits might affect one as a teacher; another might ask how a stated philosophy will impinge on one's classroom practices. Students also keep detailed field notes which can be used for reflection on the attributes of schools. Class discussions about field experiences consistently stress the relationship between topics under study and in-school observations.

In their third year, students continue their professional preparation by focusing on child development, learning, and the exceptional child. The centerpiece of the course is a long-term tutoring relationship with a pupil in a local school. Students are required to keep a detailed log, describing the interactions and observations of their tutee. The log provides a chance for students to reflect on their personal and professional growth.

The fourth year curriculum provides an opportunity for students to develop a professional identity, refine lesson delivery skills, and learn concepts of professional behavior, judgement, and responsibility. In the classroom, laboratory, and field, students learn about the role of teacher as decision-maker, develop a repertoire of instructional skills, analyze lessons, engage in peer teaching, and plan with clinical instructors (cooperating teachers). Within specific assignments, students are encouraged to critique, analyze, evaluate, and revise their own and their peers' work. The activities provide the opportunity for reflection at all three levels.

Efficacy, empowerment, and professionalism are based on substantive knowledge in academic disciplines, finely-honed pedagogical skills, the ability to reason critically, and the disposition to think reflectively. Teacher educators can provide opportunities, expectations, guided practice, and feedback--the scaffolding necessary to build cognitive and reflective structures. Individual teachers build those structures for themselves as they gain maturity and experience. We, the teachers of teachers, can facilitate growth and reflective thinking, but it is only when individuals assume responsibility for their own learning that Descartes' aphorism could be amended to read: Cogito, ergo sum magistra.

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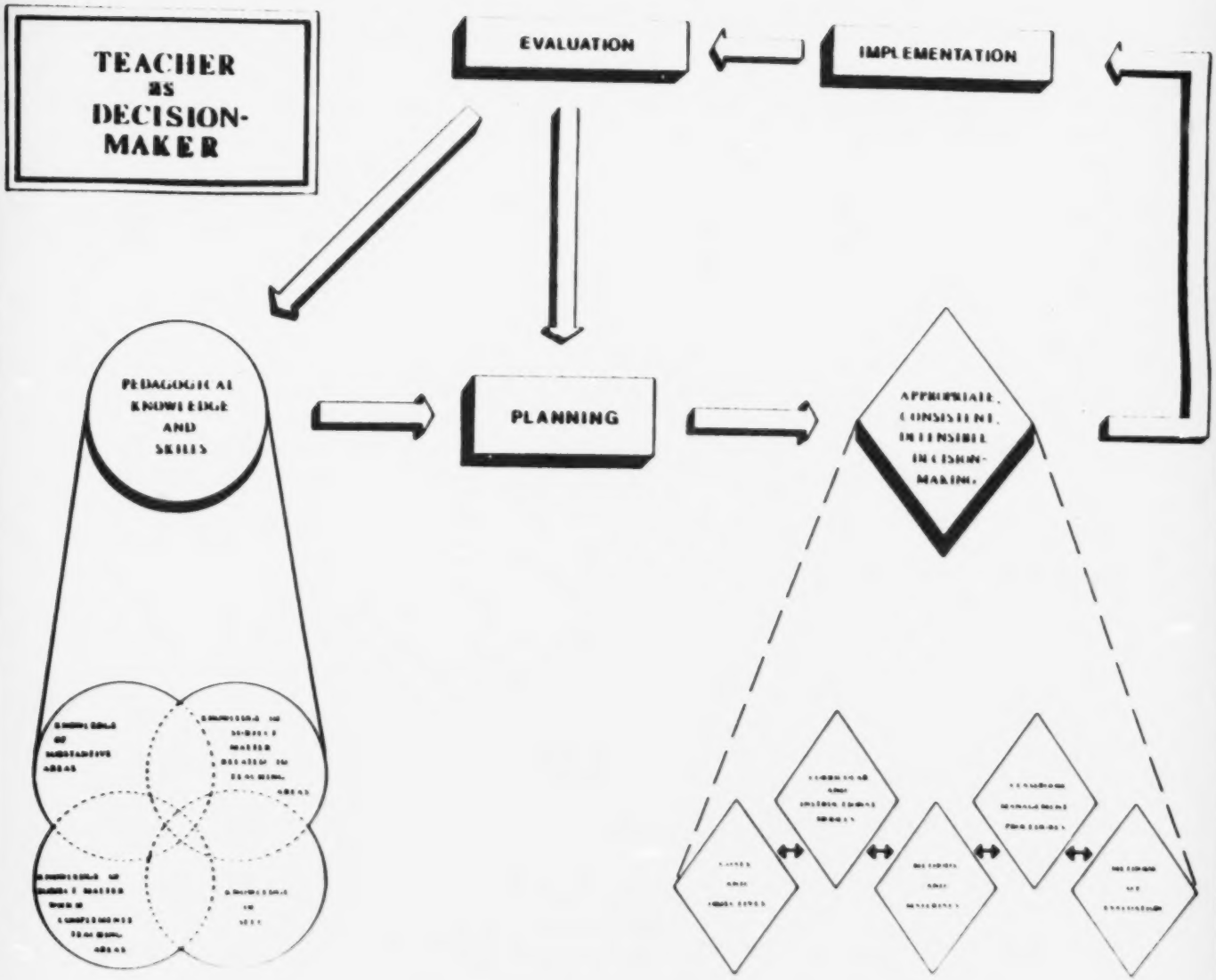

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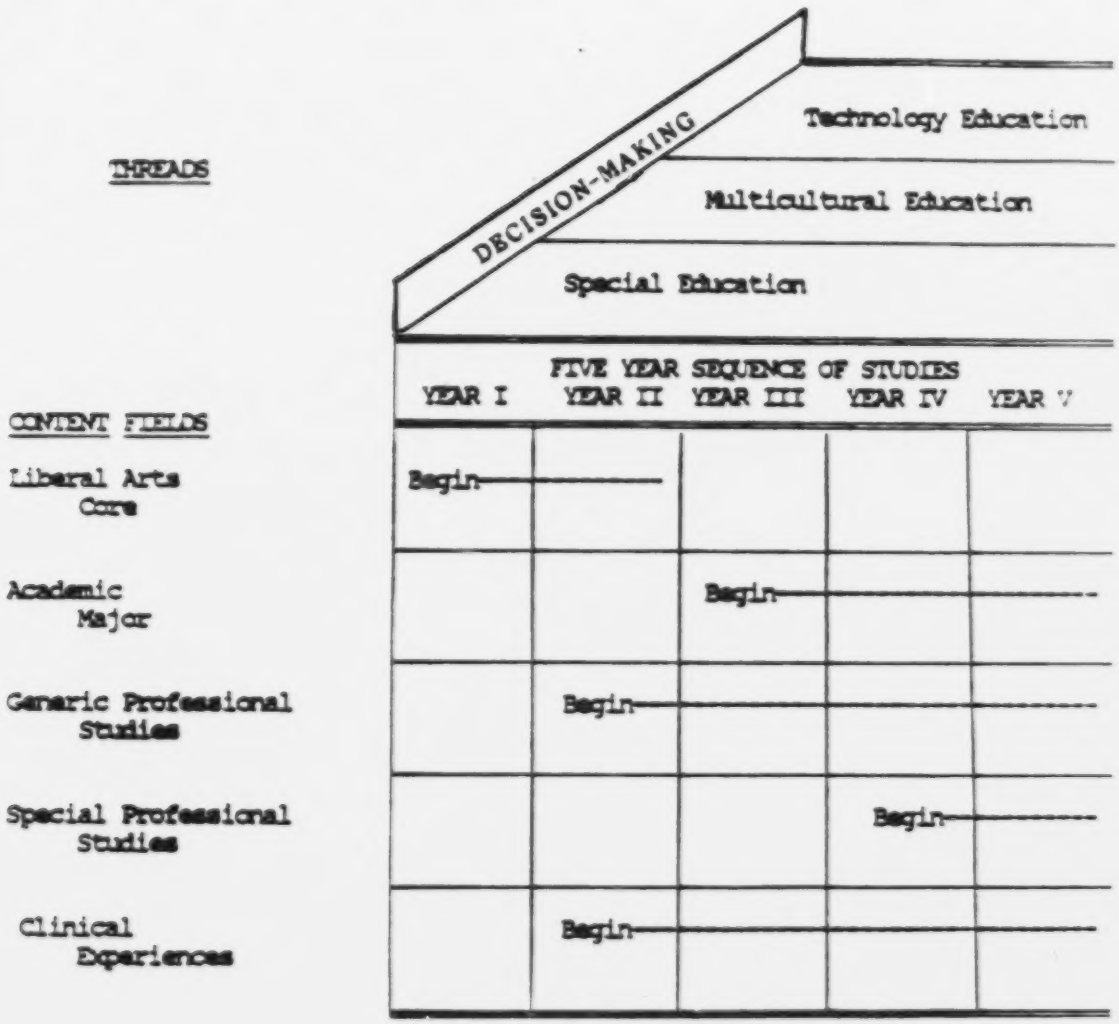
THE PROGRAM DESIGN

As indicated in the earlier narrative, the program requires five years of study leading to an undergraduate and a graduate degree. In addition to this time dimension, the program incorporates three important professional dimensions: [FIRST] Decision-making skills circumscribe the entire model. [SECOND] Students must participate in studies and experiences across five major fields. [THIRD] Instructional design requires students to acquire understandings and skills in three persistent program threads: multicultural education, technology education and special education. The following schematic presents a quick overview of the program dimensions.



Persistent Program Threads

The overall emphasis of the new teacher education model is that the prospective teacher must be a decision-maker. Obviously, every course, unit and experience in the program must attend to the development of decision-making skills.

One major thread focuses upon the need for special education preparation for all teachers. Exceptional children refers to those children whose performance deviates from the norm to the extent that special education programming is necessary for healthy growth and development. The number of exceptional children in need of special education services may exceed seven million school age boys and girls. Regular classroom teachers serve these children in the elementary and secondary schools. It is imperative that these teachers receive instruction, laboratory activities and experiences in special education programming that support appropriate, consistent and defensible decisions in providing for exceptional children. A single course experience would be inadequate.

Another major thread running throughout the program of study is multicultural education. Schools serve a pluralistic America. Teachers must comprehend the nature of multicultural education, but even more importantly they must receive classroom instruction, laboratory activities and field experiences that promote application of that knowledge. Like special education, multicultural education must be integrated within the program of studies for preservice teachers and <u>not</u> presented as a separate course of study. Concepts of multicultural education are found in all areas of the teacher education curriculum--liberal arts as well as professional studies.

The final thread permeating the new program of teacher education is the knowledge and use of educational technology. Knowledge of how various forms of technology (e.g. microcomputers) can be harnessed and used as tools by educators in both managing and implementing instruction is viewed as vital in making appropriate instructional decisions. It is assumed that many future students entering our teacher education program will already possess a minimum degree of computer literacy. If prospective teachers are to make appropriate use of technology and profit from its benefits, the teacher education program must provide for a progressive sequence of experiences with technology. To achieve this goal, appropriate uses of technology must be exemplified within both the clinical pedagogy and pedagogical skill aspects of the program. Prospective teachers will need to learn and experiment with various ways technology can be used in observation, diagnosis, planning, management, communication, and evaluation. It is anticipated that by the time students perform their <u>teaching associateship</u> in the fifth year that they will be able to use technology as a functional tool in preparing, implementing, and evaluating their instruction.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Distribution of Content Areas by Semesters

	YEAR I	YEAR II	YEAR III	YEAR IV	YEAR V
FIRST SEMESTER	LIBERAL ARTS CORE	LIBERAL ARTS CORE	ACADEMIC MAJOR FIELDS	ACADEMIC MAJOR FIELDS	TEACHER ASSOCIATESHIP
				SPECIAL SUBJECT PROFESSIONAL STUDIES	
		TEACHING AS A PROFESSION [I]	LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT [I]	INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING [I]	SPECIAL SUBJECT SEMINAR
SECOND SEMESTER	LIBERAL ARTS CORE	ACADEMIC MAJOR FIELDS	ACADEMIC MAJOR FIELDS	ACADEMIC MAJOR FIELDS	ACADEMIC MAJOR FIELDS
				SPECIAL SUBJECT PROFESSIONAL STUDIES	FOUNDATIONS OF SCHOOLS AND PROFESSIONAL ETHICS
		TEACHING AS A PROFESSION [II]	LEARNING AND EXCEPTIONALITY [II]	INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING [II]	

DESCRIPTION OF CONTENT
Percentage Distribution by Content Area

YEAR I	YEAR II	YEAR III	YEAR IV	YEAR V
	LIBERAL ARTS CORE (40%)	ACADEMIC MAJOR FIELDS (80%)	ACADEMIC MAJOR FIELDS (40%)	ACADEMIC MAJOR FIELDS (30%)
LIBERAL ARTS CORE (100%)	ACADEMIC MAJOR (40%)		SPECIAL* PROF. STUDY (40%)	TEACHING ASSOCIATE (40%)
				SR. SEM. (10%)
	GENERIC PROF. STUDY (20%)	GENERIC PROF. STUDY (20%)	GENERIC PROF. STUDY (20%)	GENERIC PROF. STUDY (20%)

Percentages on the chart are based upon five years of study producing a minimum of 160 semester hours [16 s.h. per semester.] The semester hour is used here as a unit of time. All percentages are approximate.

The results of this division of study over the five years is approximately:

Liberal Arts Core	[40-45 s.h.]	25%
Majors and Supporting Fields	[57-72 s.h.]	40%
Professional Study	[38-40 s.h.]	25%
Clinical Study	[12-15 s.h.]	10%

NOTE: (*) Special professional studies for health and physical education and special education exceed the limits of this category. Certification requirements extend into the academic major.